

REMARKS

After entry of this amendment, Claims 30-34 will be pending. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of all claims in view of the above amendments and accompanying remarks.

Rejection of Claims 1, 15 and 24-34 under 35 U.S.C. §103

The Examiner next rejects Claims 1, 15 and 24-34 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 5,513,882 ("Lewis") in view of U.S. Patent No. 1,019,000 ("Watson"). Applicant traverses this rejection. Applicant has canceled claims 1, 15, and 24-29 through this amendment, and therefore the present remarks are directed toward remaining claims 30-34.

As shown in Figure 2, Lewis does not disclose a wedge clamping arrangement for clamping flange 11 against surface 16. Consequently, a gap is left between flange 11 and surface 16, which allows fluid to enter the cavity that supports the O-ring 14.

Similar to Lewis, Watson also does not disclose any means for limiting the amount of force applied to its seal member. As shown in the figures, Watson discloses a flat seal member 10 which is clamped between two flanges. More tightening applied to the wedge results in more compression on the seal member (washer 10). There are no structures provided that prevents such forces from being applied to washer 10. In fact, Watson tends to apply a maximum amount of force that the wedge can produce onto washer 10.

Additionally, as shown in Figure 5, Watson discloses a flange 6 that rests completely against sealing member 10. Here, fluid is in direct contact with the sealing member. Such fluid contact may be detrimental when applied to connectors used in conjunction with aggressive or chemical fluids, which are present in the air-conditioning systems of vehicles. Such fluids tend to be absorbed by or cause damage to the material embodying the O-ring. This may result in leakage around the O-ring. Therefore, the teaching provided by this reference teaches directly away from providing for any limitation to the amount of force that can be applied to the washer or other seal means.

Differently, the present invention claims a configuration that provides no gap between the flange and abutment surface. This configuration results in limiting the amount of force that can be applied to the sealing member. Also, the clamping action resulting from pressing

the inner axial surface of the flange against the surface avoids the possibility that fluid may come into contact with the sealing member. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that for the reasons set forth above, Claim 30 and all claims depending therefrom are in a condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

For at least these reasons, this application is now in condition for allowance. It is believed that no additional fees are due with respect to this paper. However, if any additional fees are required in connection with the filing of this paper, permission is given to charge account number 18-0013 in the name of Rader, Fishman & Grauer PLLC.

If the Examiner has any questions or comments, he is kindly urged to call the undersigned to facilitate prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

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